

## A Sheep's Boast - JCI #82, Mar 1, 2010

### Just Checking In #82 A Sheep's Boast Psalm 23 Mar 1, 2010

*Pilgrim's in Process Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."*

The single most important thing about any person is what that person believes about God. We must never be content with our present knowledge of God. God has revealed Himself by His names for His greater glory and for our greater good. "Those who know Your name will trust in you!"

#### Psalm 23 is a marvelous analysis of the character of Yahweh our Shepherd

This Psalm is more than a cute little story like "Mary had a little lamb its fleece was white as snow....." The world of the shepherd is a world of labor and loss, wolves and wounds, blood and births, heat and cold, walking and working over endless days and sleepless nights for animals so weak, so wayward, so stupidly self destructive and hopelessly helpless that if it weren't for shepherds they would have gone extinct within a month of the ark landing on Ararat!

Jehovah Raah – Jehovah my Shepherd – Genesis 49:24 Ps 28:6-9 Isa 40:11 Rev 7:17

#### Psalm 23 is a SHEEP'S BOAST!

*The point is that a sheep needs a shepherd. If it has the right one it has it made; and if it doesn't, all is lost!*

*Psalm 23 reveals six great realities about Jehovah as Shepherd mirrored in John 10*

#### Psalm 23 the sheep's delight John 10 the Shepherd's diligence

Psalm 23 The Sheep Speaks About His Shepherd JOHN 10 The Shepherd Speaks About His Sheep Example: Psalm 23 "My Shepherd" leads John 10 "My Sheep" listen In each case, I learn something delightful about my Shepherd and I learn something distressing about myself

#### Ps 23 "My Shepherd" John 10 "My Sheep"

**HE IS A PERSONAL SHEPHERD** – "my Shepherd" this is both exclusive (true only for His sheep) and inclusive (true for every one of His sheep with out exception). Our Shepherd is specific (Yahweh) and known by His sheep even as He is knows His sheep. We are owned, valued, watched, led and cared for.

**I AM WEAK & HELPLESS** – totally helpless, pathetic, and desperately dependent on His care

**Ps 23 "I shall not want" John 10 "I give to them"**

**HE IS A PROVIDING SHEPHERD** - "I shall not want" The rest of the Psalm is a demonstration of this one, overriding reality - our Shepherd supplies every thing I need, all the time and in abundance.

Food, rest, water, restoration, direction, and protection now and forevermore.

**I AM WANTING & IN NEED** - totally dependent, needy, incapable of caring for myself

**Ps 23 – "restores..leads" John 10 "they follow me"**

**HE IS A PERSISTENT SHEPHERD** - "restores my soul" not only does the Shepherd provide, but then pursues His wandering sheep who leave the pastures of abundance and wander in the wastelands of desert and mountain. But for His own good name, Jehovah Raah, our Shepherd seeks & saves that which is lost. Oh the blessed truth: We have a stubborn Shepherd who will not quit! He will pursue and He will restore His own.

**I WANDER & GO ASTRAY** - easily deceived and distracted, bent on self destruction in my clueless curiosity

**Ps 23 "with me... death" John 10 "never perish"**

**HE IS A PRESENT SHEPHERD** - "Thou art with me" What an ocean of comfort is found in these words. If Jehovah Raah is indeed with me, then the valley of death becomes naught but a passing shadow on a journey pursued by goodness and leading to glory. Let come what may, if He be with me, then all shall be well, for He has led me here, and He is here with me here in this valley and He shall surely lead me out in His time. His rod/staff (two words for same instrument) comfort me as *He uses it as a staff*, held over the sheep, to count His sheep as they enter the sheep pen by the narrow door. He has my number and my name. And *He uses it as a rod* to defend His sheep from wolves and prowling lions. Such comfort we find in this weapon of our Shepherd. It is the object of His enemies' dread and the subject of His sheep's delight.

**I WASTE AWAY & DIE** - I dare not be left alone! Isolation brings certain desolation & destruction. The presence of the flock provides some companionship and comfort, but let the flock be shepherdless and its destruction is certain. But if I be alone but with my Shepherd, I shall have all the companionship I need.

**Ps 23 "my enemies" John 10 "nothing plucks them"**

**HE IS A PROTECTING SHEPHERD** - "prepares a table... anoints my head with oil...cup overflows"

Let my enemies surround me, my protection as well as provision is found in my Shepherd. Does David switch metaphors to Jehovah as Host? Is so, then Jehovah's loyalty, honor, and extreme generosity shines forth. If David retains the shepherd metaphor, then Jehovah's tender

provision, care, and healing are the focus. In either case, all is true and enemies will never cause our Shepherd/Host to turn away from our need.

**I AM WOUNDED & DEFENSELESS** - Enemies surround me on this long and winding pathway. I am often wounded and in great need, but my Shepherd is sufficient to restore me when wandering and heal me when wounded. There is no enemy that will cause my Shepherd to flee like a hireling. He lays down His life for mine. Oh what a Shepherd Jehovah is!

**Ps 23 "in the house...forever"      John 10 "eternal life"**

**HE IS A PERMANENT SHEPHERD** – "goodness and mercy follow me... and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." The ultimate destination of this journey with our Shepherd is not a sheep pen on a hillside. No, the ultimate destination of the sheep is the incredible invitation to take up residence in the Shepherd's house! This is too much! After all His care and comfort, protection and provision,

**I AM WORTHLESS & VILE** His care is a measure, not of my worth, but of His amazing love and loyalty to me! As we consider all these wondrous truths of Jehovah Raah, let us never think that His extreme attention to us is due to our intrinsic worth. We are worthy of nothing but hell. Let us remember, when that day comes, we shall be on our faces proclaiming not "I am worthy"... but "Thou art worthy, O Lord!" Every amazing truth of this Psalm exalts Jehovah our Shepherd even as it puts us in our place as needy, but loved sheep.

**THERE IS MORE!** There is no place, no need, no time that He will not be sufficient for you.

**Jehovah Raah is sufficient in space** - His blessings surround His sheep. His blessings are **below** us (lie down), **above** us (annoint my head), in **front** of us (leads me), **behind** us (follow me), **beside** us (with me), **surrounding** us (in the house of the Lord, forever!)

**Jehovah Raah is sufficient in need** – I shall not lack when I am **weary, hungry, thirsty, lost, afraid, alone, helpless, wounded, worried or attacked**. Jehovah Raah meets every need, every time, always and forever.

**Jehovah Raah is sufficient in time** – **Looking back over every yesterday** His presence is evident as goodness and mercy follows me all my yesterdays. **Looking around today** as darkness falls and surrounding enemies move in, still He is with me today. **And looking ahead into tomorrow**, I find Him there, welcoming me into His house forevermore.

Life will fail us before we have mined the depths of this glorious psalm. My your meditations bring you greater treasures still. And in every discovery, you will bring greater glory to your Shepherd and greater good to your soul.

### **Self Check**

1. Which of the six realities about your need is most evident to you today?
2. Which of the six realities about your Shepherd is most precious to you today? Why?

### **For Further Study**

1. Jehovah Raah – Genesis 49:24 Ps 28:6-9 Isa 40:11 Rev 7:17
2. Read Psalm 23 and John 10 and make a chart of comparison on the Shepherd and His Sheep.
3. Go find someone to share Psalm 23 with this week. It will strengthen you even as it will encourage them.

**“O Shepherd, You alone are my hope and my help. All is lost without You. All is well with You. I bless You that You are my Shepherd and all that you do for me is based on the honor of Your own holy Name. For Your Name sake, O Lord, lead me and guide me safely home. You are my Lamb, my Shepherd, my King and my God. Lead on, O Shepherd, and I will follow. In Thy Name alone I pray, Jehovah Raah, AMEN.”**

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you continually.

**Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val**

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.

**PS - current message on Psalm 23 is online at [www.bbcpa.org](http://www.bbcpa.org) under sermon links.**